United Nations E/CN.5/2005/NGO/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 December 2004

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Forty-third session
9-18 February 2005
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: review of further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Statement submitted by International Movement ATD Fourth World, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Baha'i International Community, and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2005/1.

04-66589 (E) 180105

Social Integration

We, the above named international NGOs who are all affiliated with the NGO Committee on Social Development, applaud and commend the dedicated efforts of the Commission on Social Development in pursuit of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration of the 1995 World Summit on Social Development.

Upon examining the past ten years since Copenhagen, an area in need of closer examination by governments and civil society alike is the participation of those suffering the effects of social exclusion themselves. We would highlight the following:

(1) For many reasons, including the enormous energy needed for daily survival and the social exclusion which renders them almost invisible to the rest of society, those living in poverty are often excluded from the planning and implementation of economic and social reform programs. In spite of this exclusion, people living in poverty make innumerable efforts to contribute to the improvement of their lives, and to the development process.

(2) The exclusion of the target population from the design of programs can lead to the projects' failure, as it is less likely to meet the needs of those it aims to help. In addition, frustration and social exclusion can manifest themselves in conflict and may lead to increased instability within families and society as a whole.

(3) During times of conflict, the marginalization of those living in poverty, women, minorities, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities is intensified by the lack of comprehensive safety net procedures. These groups and individuals are most vulnerable in times of conflicts and crises, from childhood to old age.

When approaching the issue of social integration it is imperative that the debate begins at the grassroots level where the needs of the stakeholders are best identified. In promoting social integration governments need to:

(1) Foster the use of **broad-based consultation** in the design and implementation of development policies and programs. Consultation is understood as a process of collective decision-making that maximizes participation of all stakeholders and seeks to arrive at the truth of a matter.

(2) Assess the existence of formal and informal structures that **facilitate collaborative initiatives** to determine their effectiveness and the need to develop new structures.

(3) Use **surveys and community liaisons** to determine the extent of participation (percentage of the community involved) and the degree to which those community members who are typically excluded are involved in the decision-making process: people living in poverty, women, minorities, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities.

(4) Implement methods of **quantitative analysis** in order to measure the number and frequency of consultations held and the percentage of the community involved.

(5) Once groups and individuals who have been left out of the process are identified, innovative approaches should be developed to reach them and to **ensure their participation.**

We are encouraged by the inclusion of civil society in the +10 Review Process and look forward to collaborating with governments to realize the full implementation of the Copenhagen Commitments and the Millennium Development Goals.

This statement is supported by the following non-governmental in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council:

AARP
Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Congregations of St. Joseph
Dominican Leadership Conference
Elizabeth Seton Foundation
Franciscans International
International Association of Charities
International Association of Schools of Social Work
International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres
International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation
Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries
VIVAT International